

Left in Charge



no. 4

CHAS. A. MERRITT

To Charlie Merritt
From James Hood
March 1st 1913

CHAS MERRITT

Ossining

N. Y

CHAS. A. MERRITT



"OUT FLEW THE BIRD AND SOARED AWAY."—p. 20.

LEFT IN CHARGE

BY

JENNIE CHAPPELL

AUTHOR OF "WHO WAS THE CULPRIT?"

And Other Stories



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LEFT IN CHARGE.

BY JENNIE CHAPPELL



“**N**OW, children, what shall I do to amuse you?”

Nine-year-old Rachel Harman seated herself with a very maternal air in her mother's arm-chair, or rather on the edge of it, that her feet might be planted in proper grown-up position on the floor. Then she turned up the bottom of her little skirt over her knees, as she had seen her mother do, and smoothed her little apron down, and looked with as much dignity and benignity as she could command upon Daisy and Benny, who were cuddling together on one big hassock at her feet.

Rachel felt very old and responsible that night, for their mother had gone to a town a long way distant to see their father, who was

lying in the hospital ill, and could not get back until very late ; Rachel being left alone in the cottage in charge of her little sister and brother.

"Let's play at horses," suggested Benny.

"Oh, no, that isn't nice for indoors, dear," said Rachel, in gentle dissuasion. "I'll tell you a story!"

"Your stories are done in a minute," objected Daisy. "And you always tell the same one. Let's play at 'mothers,' an' I'll be your little girl, eh? An' Benny can be the father, and you ought to tell me to go to school, and I ought to want to stop at home, and then you get cross, eh? And say you'll tell my father about me, and then you be the gov'ness and come after me, eh? Oh, do!"

"An' I'll have the stick and p'etend to beat you," concluded Benny, making a rush for the article in question.

Daisy had grown quite eager and excited as she sketched out her tempting programme, so that Rachel was able to agree to it, "to please the little ones," without losing a single inch of the height to which she felt her position raised her, though its fulfilment did not involve a very large amount of self-denial on her own part.

All went gaily for some considerable time. First Rachel was "mother," and then Daisy,

and each in turn filled the rôle of an appallingly naughty child to the complete satisfaction of the reigning parent ; while Benny represented the varied characters of father, policeman, School Board " ' spector," and man with a sack for the final disposal of the said unmanageable child, with as moderate an application of the indispensable " stick " as the frequent and urgent demands for it would allow.

" Now let's play at being good," suggested Rachel, by-and-by, with a vague feeling that they ought to quiet down a bit before going to bed.

With some difficulty she induced them to sit upon two separate chairs, with their little fat hands folded in their pinafores laps, and was just going to request Daisy to " say her hymn," when a strange rapping was heard at the door.

" What's that ? " exclaimed Daisy, startled, and slipping off her chair to get behind Rachel.

The little mother's face grew grave and white, while Benny's eyes and mouth alike seemed fixed wide open. A great stillness followed.

" I think it was the wind," said Rachel, with a brave attempt at self-assurance. But even as she spoke the noise came again—tap-tap-tap-tap-tap-tap-tap !—a succession of gentle, even-

sounding raps upon the panel. It was not like an ordinary knocking at the door—that was what made it seem so peculiar ; besides, there was a knocker which anyone might see. What could it be ?

“Don’t let’s be silly !” said Rachel, next. “I’ll call through the key-hole and ask who it is.”

This she did, while the others listened in breathless silence for a reply. But none came.

Rachel returned to the little ones. “We mustn’t be frightened,” whispered the little heroine, trying to keep her teeth from chattering ; “God can take care of us, you know. And mother asked Him to just before she went out, and I believe He will——”

Tap-tap-tap-tap !

“There it is again !” shrieked Daisy, in a paroxysm of terror, for she was a nervous child, and she forthwith scrambled under the table. Ben, who was not nervous, kept on staring.

Again Rachel went to the door. “If you please, what do you want ?” she asked, as loudly as she could, but in a shaking voice.

There was a sound as of something moving outside, but still no reply.

“Suppose it’s some poor person, very tired and ill,” said Rachel, as a new thought struck her ; “or a little child, lost its way, perhaps !”



"SULTAN WAS TUGGING AT HER NIGHT-DRESS."—p. 13.

"They don't say nuffin," observed Benny, doubtfully.

"I b'lieve we ought to open the door and see," continued Rachel. "We don't know *who* it might be." For stories of offering shelter to good angels, or even the Lord Jesus Himself in the form of a poor wanderer, were floating mistily in her mind. "I think I shall!"

Benny grasped his stick, and Daisy pulled down the table-cover wherewith to smother eyes and ears, at these resolute words.

"God *won't* let anybody hurt us!" was the little mother's brave declaration as she drew the bolts.

She opened the door just a crack at first, but a big black paw, and a shiny black nose, soon made the aperture wider, and in walked Sultan, Mr. Barry's retriever dog from the farm half a mile away. He had been lying on the doorstep, and his tail went thumping against the door every time he scratched his back! The children, who knew him well, guessed what it was, now; and how they laughed!

Sultan was made much of between them, and he cast sentimental glances at first one and then the other, as he sat before the fire, and wiped his jaws extravagantly with his long red tongue for every tiniest crumb of the children's supper cake.

"Now we must go to bed," said Rachel,

conscientiously, as the clock struck eight; "and Sultan will stop here and mind the house till mother comes home."

Rachel heard the little ones say their prayers, and buttoned their night-gowns, and tucked them up in the most maternal fashion; then she crept into her own little bed, and all three were soon fast asleep.

She had a queer dream that night. She thought that it was morning, and she heard her mother get up and light the kitchen fire, and the wood roared and crackled and filled the house with suffocating smoke. And then she fancied her mother came to her in bed, saying, "Get up, get up, Rachel!" and pulled all the bed-clothes off her because she did not move.

And then she woke, in strange alarm, and the coverings *were* all off, and the room *was* full of smoke, and Sultan was tugging at her little night-dress as if he would strip that from her too.

The house was on fire!

A hot cinder had jumped out of the bars on the paper "dunce's cap" that Benny in the capacity of "'spector" had provided for the imaginary truant, and this in its turn set light to some other article near it, and now the whole lower part of the cottage was in a blaze.

There was no getting downstairs; they were imprisoned. Sultan ran to the landing

again and again, but the hot flames would not let him pass. Then he ran backwards and forwards in such excitement and distress that the children became more terrified than before, and clung together, almost too much scared to cry.

Suddenly an inspiration came to Rachel; she would open the window and let Sultan out that way, for it was not so very far from the ground.

With some difficulty her shaking hands accomplished this. The dog dashed through the opening and was lost in the darkness below. They longed to follow, but it was too far for them to jump. They crowded to breathe the fresh air, for the atmosphere was growing terribly thick and hot behind them, and at intervals they raised faint little cries for help; but the house stood back from the lane, and few people passed that way by night.

If only mother would come home! That was the burden of their sobs. Little thinking, poor innocents, how powerless mother's arm would be to fight the fearful enemy that was momentarily gaining upon them. Neither—and this was a mercy—did they fully realise the fate that threatened them.

But cheering voices reach their ears; men's forms become visible in the reddened dusk around the burning house.

"You're safe, little 'uns! We're coming!" shouts Mr. Barry from the farm. And a blanket is held beneath the window by four pairs of strong arms. "Jump! Jump! You're all right. Don't be afraid! We won't let you fall!" urge their deliverers. The children jump; Benny first, Rachel next, and little Daisy last, and so all are saved.

"But for that dear, blessed dog they'd have been all burnt in their beds!" cries mother, pressing the precious three to her heart in transports of thankful joy. "The Lord it was who sent him, just as much as if he'd been an angel from heaven; and gave him the sense to go and fetch the people to them. We can never praise His name enough as long as we live."

The kind neighbours made a collection for the restoration of the ruined home, and several rich gentlemen round about subscribed handsomely to the fund, almost as much, I believe, because of the interest aroused by the story of the sagacious dog, as for the sake of the family themselves.

When the house was rebuilt and furnished, enough money was left over to buy Sultan a new collar with a silver plate, on which was engraved the date of his noble deed. And this collar he proudly wears at the present day.

JENNIE'S BIRD.

BY LUCY L. WEEDON.

“WHAT 'S the time, mother?”

“Nearly seven, Jennie ; shall I put you to bed?”

“Not just yet, please ; I'll wait till Tom comes in.”

Jennie was a little cripple, and lay all day long stretched on the rough couch which Tom had made for her out of some packing cases which a kind-hearted grocer had given him.

Tom and his mother were very poor, and could afford no luxuries for the sick child, but Jennie had a happy, contented disposition, and was as pleased with her couch as though it were a handsome piece of furniture, straight from the upholsterer's. Jennie's father had died when she was quite a baby, and her

mother had had a hard struggle to provide for herself and her two children ; but now Tom was old enough to go to work, and Mrs. Daly hoped that the worst of the bad times was over.

Shortly after seven Tom came in, carrying something tied up in a red pocket-handkerchief. He held it up before his little sister. "Guess what I've got, Jennie," he said, his plain, good-humoured face one broad grin of delight.

"I can't guess, Tom ; do show me !"

Then Tom untied the red handkerchief and displayed a small wooden cage, containing a little brown bird. "It's for you, Jennie," said he, putting the cage down beside her. "I thought it would be a nice companion for you when mother and I are away."

"Oh, Tom, you *are* good !" cried the child ; "I shall never be dull any more now. What a pretty fellow he is, and what bright, knowing little eyes he has ! Didn't you have to pay a lot for him ?"

"Oh, not much," replied Tom, "the man let me have him cheap."

He did not tell Jennie that he had gone on short commons for days past in order to buy the bird for her. But the mother guessed, and laid her hand lovingly on her boy's shoulder. She was proud of him, rough,

plain-featured boy though he was. And I'm not surprised that she was, are you, little reader?

How Jennie did love Dick! as she called him. The long, weary hours that she lay by herself were lightened to her by his presence. She had no toys or books to amuse her, but she never missed them, now that she had Dick. She talked to the bird, calling him all sorts of pet names, and Dick really seemed to understand what she said to him, and became so tame that he would come out of his cage and perch on her finger and eat from her hand.

Time passed on, and as the warm weather set in, Jennie seemed much better and could manage to sit up for a short time every day, and Tom and his mother began to think that she was going to get quite well. One day when Tom came in from his work he said, "Jennie, how would you like to go into the country for a day?"

Jennie had never been into the country, and the very idea made her eyes sparkle; so it was arranged that Tom, who had been saving up for a long time past for the treat, should take his little sister the following day away into the country. They were to go by a cheap excursion train. A neighbour's perambulator was borrowed, so that Jennie could

be wheeled to and from the station; and Jennie was so delighted at the idea of the day's outing that Mrs. Daly really thought it might do her good.

Jennie's first glimpse of the real country she never forgot. "Tom," she whispered, "do you think heaven is like this? I hope it is."

"I don't know," replied Tom; "teacher said that in heaven the streets are of gold."

Jennie sighed, so Tom put his arm round her and said, consolingly, "Never mind, perhaps there'll be a little bit of country somewhere up in heaven for the little London girls and boys to play in."

Poor ignorant Tom! who knows? Maybe he was not so very far wrong, after all.

Tom found a comfortable mossy bank for Jennie to rest on, and there, with Dick beside her—for he had been brought too—she lay and revelled in the bright sunshine and cool, fresh air.

"Tom, what's the matter with Dick? it seems as though he were trying to get out."

"I expect he is," said Tom. "You see, he hears the other birds and wants to get to them."

Jennie lay very still for a time, then she said, "Would you mind if I let him go, Tom?"

"Mind? Why, Jennie, you couldn't spare him. You are so fond of Dick."

"It's just because I'm so fond of him that I can't bear to keep him, if he wants to go. Think how lovely it would be if we could live in the country always. I know we can't, but Dick at least shall be happy." And the little girl opened the door of the cage. Out flew the bird and soared away, away up into the blue sky, singing a joyous song.

And little Jennie? Tired with the unwonted journey, and overcome with grief at losing her favourite, though she had let him go of her own free will, she first burst into tears; and then, to Tom's intense dismay, fainted. Tom shouted lustily for help, and a gentleman who was riding past, dismounted and came to see what was the matter. He happened to be a doctor, and it was not long before he restored Jennie to consciousness. Then he questioned Tom as to how he and the invalid child came to be there, all by themselves, and gradually drew from him their sad little history. He was wonderfully touched to hear of the sacrifice Jennie had made, and before he rode away, wrote down their address in his pocket-book and told them that he should not forget them.

He faithfully kept his promise, for a few days later a strange gentleman, who proved

to be a friend of the country doctor's, came to see Jennie. By his advice and assistance she was placed in a hospital, and when at length she left it, she was perfectly cured, and able to walk and run like other little children.

The good doctor's kindness did not stop here. He found Mrs. Daly employment in the village in which he lived, and took Tom into his own service. So, now, if you were to call upon Jennie, you would find her living in a pretty rose-covered cottage, with a garden of sweet-smelling flowers in front of it; and perhaps you would even see Dick, for he built himself a nest in the thatch of Jennie's cottage. Far from having forgotten his little mistress, he comes down to her to be fed every day, and Jennie loves him better than ever, for she says she owes all her good fortune to him.

WHAT THE RABBITS DID.

BY F. M. HOLMES.

"I KNOW mother won't like it!"
"Oh! she won't mind if they don't hurt anything."

"But they will hurt things. Oh, there! they are eating my geranium."

And almost shrieking with annoyance and anger, the little maiden dashed across the lawn after two beautiful silver-grey rabbits that were nibbling her plants.

"Now you are hurting my rabbits, you cruel thing!"

"I'm not; I only took them by their ears. Everybody takes rabbits by their ears. And you ought not to let them out of their hutch. Oh! now they are eating the fuchsia. Go away! horrid rabbits!"

And she chased them from the flower and

all round the garden. Away they went, leaping and frisking, and showing their little white tails, now crashing through the verberna bed and breaking some of the delicate blooms, anon plunging through quite a small forest of mignonette, then pausing to nibble some nasturtium leaves or carnation flowers, and, worst of all, to scratch and scrape holes in the lawn.

The more Laura chased them the more difficult they seemed to be to catch. "Oh! they *won't* be caught!" she cried at last in despair. "Oh, mother *will* be cross with you, Bertie!"

"Well, it's your fault, Laura; you shouldn't run after them so, you make them worse."

"They were eating my flowers!" replied Laura, stoutly, in self-defence.

And again she made a rush at the little animals, which, poised on their hind legs, were nibbling at the leaves and flowers of a choice moss-rose. In their haste to escape from the impetuous Laura they knocked against the rose and toppled it over, for it was placed not very securely on a bank where the lawn descended abruptly to a gravel path. Down it fell, and the stem was broken, and the flowers crushed, for the pot itself rolled on the plant, and the mould was scattered on the neat and clean gravel walk.

The children gazed at the disaster in blank dismay. Their parents were very particular about the garden, which was kept in beautiful order, and they would be sure to be vexed when they saw the broken flower.

"It's all your fault!" exclaimed Laura, sharply.

"It's all yours," retorted Bertie. "You hunted the rabbits about so."

"You should not have let them out at all," cried Laura.

"A little running about does them good sometimes," said Bertie; "and they would not have done any harm if it had not been for you. I say it is all your fault, and I shall tell mother so," and he walked off after his rabbits.

He made no attempt to rush on them hurriedly, but walking up quietly, he caught them directly, without any frisking away or hasty flight on the part of the little animals.

When he had housed them in safety he returned to his sister, who had in the meantime picked up the moss-rose, replaced the pot on the bank, and was endeavouring to scrape up the earth from the gravel path.

"It is of no use," said Bertie. "You cannot mend the broken flower, and you cannot make the path clean. Let us go in and look at our lessons."



“IT’S ALL YOUR FAULT!” EXCLAIMED LAURA.”

A few minutes later, Benjie, the gardener's boy, had occasion to pass the spot where the ruined rose-tree stood.

He stopped and stared aghast at the broken flower.

"Law!" said he, "won't master and missus be angry. They thought so much of this 'ere rose!" And he went closer to examine it.

"Why, Benjie, what have you done there?" asked a stern voice.

"Please, sir, I didn't do nothing," answered Benjie, turning round and finding himself before Mr. and Mrs. Mayhew, the master and mistress of the house, who had come out on their way to dine at a friend's house.

"But my beautiful moss-rose is broken; how did that happen?" asked the lady.

"Please, 'm, I don't know," said Benjie; "I saw it was broken a minute ago."

"And have you no idea how it became broken?" asked Mr. Mayhew, sharply.

"No, sir, not any," answered Benjie, frankly.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Mayhew looked at the boy closely, but they let him pass, for they had no time then to inquire further into the matter.

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"Have your rabbits been out, Bertie?"

The boy changed colour and looked across

the table at his father. "No, father," he replied.

"Then how came those scratchings on the lawn?"

The boy was about to reply that he did not know, when his father said, "I do not mean this morning—I mean yesterday. The rabbits or a dog must have scraped up the grass. Are you sure they were not out yesterday?"

It was the morning after the moss-rose had been broken, and Laura and Bertie were sitting at breakfast with their parents. Mr. Mayhew had been walking in the garden, and his keen, critical eye had caught sight of the scratchings on the lawn.

"They were out a little time," said Bertie, hesitatingly; "only a very little time."

He had mustered up a trifle of courage to own a small part of the truth at last. "I thought you would not mind if they were out only a little time, and did no harm," he added.

"But," said his father, "you know that I objected to your letting them run about on the lawn. I am afraid, my boy, that unless you can manage to keep your pets within bounds I shall have to insist on your getting rid of them."

Presently, just toward the close of break-

fast, Mr. Mayhew remarked to his wife: "I think we shall have to send Benjie away. He must have broken the moss-rose, and he won't acknowledge his fault."

"Yes," said Mrs. Mayhew, "it is very vexing; the rose is completely spoiled."

The children gazed at each other in sheer dismay. They had heard nothing of their father's interview with poor Benjie in the garden the previous day, and they had certainly never imagined that their conduct would result in anything so dreadful as this. They rather liked Benjie, and could not bear that he should be punished for their fault. Each waited for the other to say something, but neither of them spoke for some moments. Then Laura burst out, "It was not Benjie at all, father, you mustn't send him away; it was all those horrid ——" and then she stopped abruptly.

But Bertie took up the story at once, and in a very shamefaced way confessed that the rabbits had done all the mischief. It was a most painful confession, and required all his courage to make it, but he felt that he could not remain silent.

He was severely punished, of course, and had even to part with his beloved silver-greys. But he remembered afterwards that disobedience, even in little things, is dis-

obedience still, and may produce great results ; while, if a fault is committed, the best way is frankly to own it, especially if another is likely to be injured by our own foolish conduct.

As to Benjie, he lost the look of anxiety from his face when he learned how he had been cleared, and sought by little kindnesses to cheer the pair all he could.

A few weeks afterwards another moss-rose bloomed on the bank, for the children subscribed their pocket-money to surprise their parents by replacing the flower that had been broken.

"CRACK! CRACK!"—A TIGER STORY.

BY A. COLLYER.



"**A** TIGER, pooh! *I* wouldn't be afraid of a tiger," said Tom Charlton, as he idly swung to and fro on the garden gate. "I'd take that stick of mine"—glancing at a heavy stick lying on the ground—"and give him such a blow with it, he would be glad to run away."

"It might make him all the fiercer," rejoined Jimmy Blake, who had been listening intently; "what would you do then?"

"I don't know," said Tom, thoughtfully, taking up the stick—"wait until he rushed at me, then dodge on one side and whack him again, crack! crack!" and Tom brought the stick down on the gate so fiercely that there was indeed a crack! crack! The top bar broke, the splinters flew far and near, and

Tom stopped, horrified at the mischief he had done, for the gate had been made and carved elaborately by his brother; and his father was very justly proud of it.

"You've done it now," said Jim, gleefully, as he put his curly red mop of hair over the fence; "won't you get into a row!"

Tom ruefully regarded the shattered gate—the top bar broken clean through, the carving splintered, the green paint scratched, and one of the hinges decidedly loose!

He looked back at the house: he could see his father in the library, reading a paper. Tom could not see his face, but he knew how it would look when he confessed, and how that little stick—kept in the farthest, darkest corner—would be brought out, and come with the horrid *swish*, peculiarly its own, down on Tom's back. The tears came into his eyes. What was Jim chuckling at? Didn't *he* break the cucumber frame last week, trying to walk between the glass? And had *Tom* laughed when he was kept in, doing sums? The world's ingratitude was really heart-breaking?

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Jimmy, rolling against the fence in his enjoyment, "your face was enough to make any fellow laugh. What would you do if you met a tiger? Crack! crack! He, he, he!"

"Oh, go away," said Tom, crossly.

Jim looked up, stopped laughing, then put his arm gently round Tom's shoulder.

"I'm awfully sorry, old fellow," he said, gravely. "Can't I do anything?"

"It's no good," answered Tom, gloomily: "I've done such a lot of things I oughtn't to this week. Dad said he wouldn't let me off next time."

"Go up and tell him now," suggested Jim, "and get it over."

Tom glanced back at the stern face. No, he couldn't screw up his courage *just then*. He shook his head.

"No," he said, slowly, "I'll wait a bit. Let's go and spend the afternoon in the wood. Father will find it out before I come back, and then I'll tell him I did it."

Jim had a dim consciousness that to stave off the evil hour thus was foolish, but he said nothing, and running off home to ask permission for his ramble, shouted back to Tom to walk slowly on. Tom, still holding the fateful stick, went down the path that led to the wood.

It was a lovely summer's day. Flowers nodded, and big white butterflies hovering close round Tom seemed to invite his attention. But he noticed nothing; something was telling him he was a coward—he talked

loudly about fighting tigers, yet he hadn't enough courage to face a little stick, and take his punishment like a man; running away instead of owning up. "You're afraid," said his conscience; and even the breeze blew gently into his ear, it seemed to him, "Yes, you're *afraid!* Bah, you're afraid!"

What a long time Jim was! Tom thought he would sit down and wait. How quiet the wood was! Not a sound—the birds had gone to sleep, surely, and only that squirrel away there in the high tree was alive. Should he tell? Should he go back now? Yes; perhaps the breeze would stop then—Hark! what was that? "Jim!" No answer. Tom could hear soft footsteps coming nearer, and heavy, deep breathing. What could it be? His heart beat as if it would burst. The wood was deathly silent—only the squirrel overhead, and those soft footfalls. He strained his eyes in their direction. Nearer, nearer—pit-pat, pit-pat—they were here!

Tom started back with a shriek of terror, for there, in front of him, stood a TIGER—a cruel, fierce-looking tiger, with gleaming teeth and eyes. He was white with fear, his dry mouth stood open, and he stretched out his hands as if to keep the tiger off. A minute passed—two minutes—then the tiger gave a long low growl.

At that growl the spell which had bound Tom was broken. With a cry of despair he took to his heels. Down the green pathways, over bramble bushes, bumping up against trees ran Tom, gasping, choking, and "pit-pat" came those awful footsteps behind him.

Now he was out of the wood, on the path leading to the river. In front lay the ferryman's cottage. If he could only reach it in time! while he had still a little breath, and before his trembling legs broke down altogether. "Help, help!" What was that? A boat—and close into the bank, too—with the long cord, by which it had been carelessly tied up, dragging in the water, and the sun blistering its pretty blue and gold paint. Tom noticed none of these things. The cottage was still some yards off, he felt ill and weak, while the footsteps were nearer, and he fancied he could even feel the tiger's warm breath on his cheek. A sudden thought struck him. He flew down the grassy bank, and half tumbled, half leaped into the boat, which spun round, then drifted out into mid-stream. Tom caught a glimpse of the cruel head and fierce mouth of the tiger appearing above the bank, heard men shouting and running, then the trees on the shore began to swim round him, and all at once he tumbled over in a dead faint. . . .

When Tom next opened his eyes he was in his own room at home. Quite a group of people were there, and his mother, sobbing bitterly, was bathing his head. Then, when things had settled down a little, his father, with his arms round him and a gentle look on his face, told Tom all about it—the tiger's escape from the travelling menagerie, the keepers' search for it, their arrival just as Tom jumped into the boat, and how three had caught the animal, whilst the fourth had gone after Tom and brought him home.

Tom lay quiet, listening silently ; but when all except his father and mother had left the room, he drew his father down to him and whispered the story of the gate, ending with—

"I know I wasn't a bit brave about meeting that tiger, though I boasted to Jim I would be ; but, at any rate, I can be brave about owning up when I've done wrong—and I WILL."

And he did, too, though it was too bad of Jim to say, when he met him next day, "I found your stick, Tom. Why didn't you stop and see what the tiger would have done if you had given him CRACK, CRACK?"

"BENJAMIN BOND."

A TRUE STORY.

BY A. EVA RICHARDSON.



IT was funny! He was so very small, and he had such a very long name for such a little dog, so they generally called him Ben.

Now, Ben was not a beauty; indeed, as a great secret, I may tell you he was rather ugly. But then there is an old proverb, which I hope you all know, that says, "Handsome is as handsome does," and Ben certainly *did* handsomely, as you will soon see.

Ben lived in the country, at a little village about twenty miles from London. As a baby he had lived and slept in a stable with an old donkey, and Koko and he were bosom friends.

When Koko stood up, Ben would spring in the air till he reached his nose, and lick him, and give a funny little bark. He was

most polite, and always remembered to say good morning to his dumb friend.

At last a sad day dawned for poor little Benjamin Bond. The people to whom he belonged left the country, and went right away to live in a foreign land, and Ben was given to a friend in London.

Now London, with its beautiful shops, and exhibitions, and all the wonderful things one sees there, is a delightful place in its way, and many people and children like it very much. But Ben did not.

He missed his kind master, and feared something must be wrong that he never came to chat with him and take him out. Besides, he had always been free before, and treated like a dog of sense, and allowed to do pretty much as he liked, and if he wished (alas, that I need record such a thing!) he had chased rabbits and rats, if he could find any, at his own sweet will. And now he had been packed in a basket and brought in a great thundering train to this big town, where there were no rabbits skipping about, with their little white tails in the air, and just ready to whisk into some mysterious sandy hole, into which Ben could never follow, though he sniffed and burrowed in a vain pursuit, till his poor little bones were quite tired. It was terribly sad!

Ben sat in his kennel in the yard, with his back towards the door, and thought.

And as he thought it all over, he found he could do without the rabbits, and even the donkey, but his master he *must* have, because he loved him.

So poor Ben sat alone in the kennel, with his little heart broken, and thought how he could ever find his dear master. And the nice dinners went untasted, and the most savoury bone lay in the yard till the neighbour's black cat stole it, and yet Ben did not move.

Then they took him for a walk in the park, with a long leather leash attached to his collar, and added insult to injury. Ben walked very slowly, and sat down very often, and his new master was terribly ashamed.

"Such a stupid little dog, nothing in him," he remarked, crossly, as he fastened the leather leash round the ring of Ben's kennel and made it quite secure.

Was there "nothing in him"? Ben sat as usual in his kennel till he was sure that he was quite alone, then turned round quickly and commenced to work. Ben had not been thinking all these days for nothing, that was clearly certain.

With one small paw he held the thong firmly, and then began to eat through it with his little teeth. But the leather was new, and

Ben's teeth were old, and first one and then another broke with the effort. Still Ben worked away, nothing daunted. At last he lay down to rest, this time cheerfully.

Presently the dustman came and opened the yard gate.

"It's all right; the dog's tied up," called out the cook. "Besides, he's such a *stupid* little thing you needn't mind *him*."

The dustman came on cheerfully. Suddenly he started. Something had gone past him like a flash, was out of the yard, and tearing down the road at full speed, a small piece of leather leash hanging from his collar.

"Dog's bolted!" called out the dustman.

And then began a commotion. All the household turned out and ran after the dog that had "nothing in him."

But Ben ran on. He meant to find his old master and stay with him this time, and did not intend to be caught. Poor little lost country dog—alone in London!

It was Christmas Eve, and the village policeman was going his last rounds. "I'll just look at that empty house," he said. "It was full enough last year at this time." He pushed back the gate, and walked on over the crisp, white snow. As he reached the house he thought he heard a moan, and surely something moved, just under what

used to be the master's window. He came a little nearer, and stooped down.

"Law!" he said, suddenly starting back. "Why, I do believe it's little Ben. But it can't be; he's in London. I say, Ben! Ben!"

Ben tried to bark a welcome, but was too feeble. He lifted his tired head, and looked at the policeman.

"Yes, it is," said he; "it's Ben, sure enough, though I'd never have known him. He's nothing but bones, and the white snow red from his bleeding feet. Poor little chap, you must have run all the way. Well, it beats me to know how you found the old place."

He stooped, and picked the poor dog up in his arms, and carried him to his own home, and fed and cared for him. And Ben did not turn his back on the policeman.

Next day a letter was put in the country post, which found its way to France, and made Ben's old master vote him the faith-fullest little dog in the world, and arrange at once to have him sent over the sea. And Ben recovered, and grew strong once more; and chases French rabbits on a foreign sand-hill, and runs proudly along the road after his master, followed at a respectful distance by some French poodles, who can't quite understand an English terrier.

So faithful Benjamin Bond had his reward!

CHAS MERRITT

Ossining

N. Y

PUFF'S ADVENTURE.

BY "JACEY."

CHARLIE MORGAN was in trouble ; anyone might have guessed that. He stood aimlessly about, with his hands in his pockets, his eyebrows drawn very much up, and the corners of his mouth very much down. Besides which, though it was now well on in the afternoon, he had not been heard to whistle once since ten o'clock in the morning.

At that hour his father had told him, finally and irrevocably, that Puff must go.

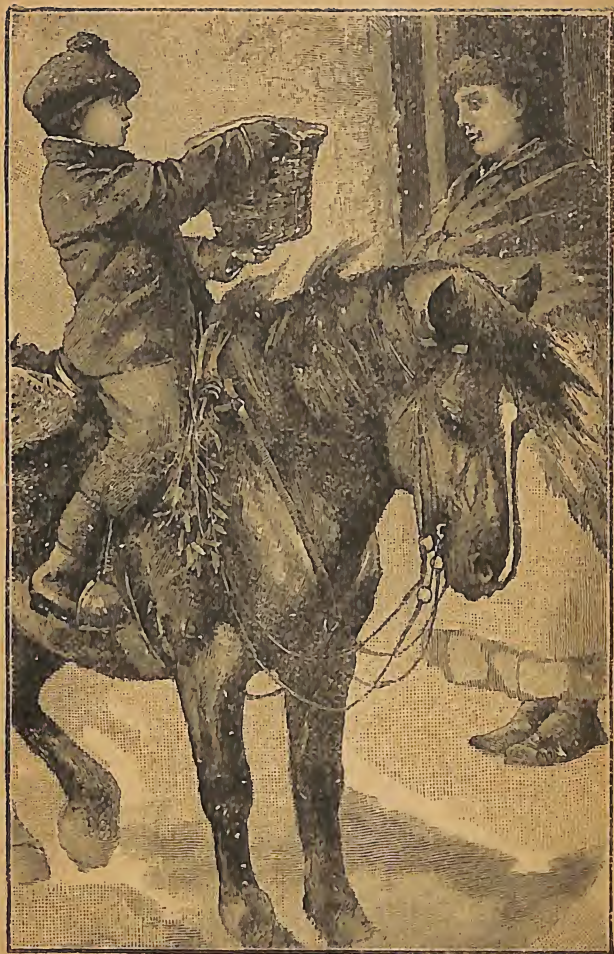
Charlie's mother, after an absence from home of some weeks, had returned at Christmas to find her son in possession of a new dog—the roundest, whitest, fluffiest, funniest, "knowingest" little puppy (if we may take Charlie's word) that ever was seen.

But unfortunately Mrs. Morgan had recently heard of a very shocking case of hydrophobia, and being naturally rather nervous, it had made a great impression on her mind. She was in daily fear that Puff might bite Charlie's little sister, who was not old enough to know better than to sometimes pull his curly hair or his tail; so there was nothing for it but Puff must go.

Charlie had begged, and had induced Puff to beg too, and argued, and cried, but all without avail. And now the how and the whither of doggie's departure lay heavy on his heart. "I wouldn't mind," he said, "at least, not so much, if I knew of a good home for him. But Tom Butler has got a dog, and Harry Ware doesn't want one, and the Wilson boys can't have him because they are going to a boarding-school, and all the fellows I know have every one of them some reason why they can't take poor Puff in. I don't know what I shall do!"

"I'll take him up to Burton for yer, on market day, and lose him in the town," suggested Jim, the stable boy.

Not that I believe he really would have done so. Perhaps he thought he could sell him to a friend, and so pocket a shilling for himself. But you should have seen Charlie's eyes flash!



PUFF'S ADVENTURE.—P. 44.

"Lose him in the town!" he cried, indignantly, "and let him be wandering about and starve? I'd rather—there, I declare to you, I'd rather tie a brick round his neck and drown him with my own hands! I should, at any rate, know the end of him then."

The next day was New Year's Day, and sadly it dawned for Charlie. It was the last day of tolerance for Puff.

"If you don't get rid of him," said his father, "I must."

One of Charlie's errands that morning was to mount the brown pony and ride out a mile or so, with a couple of hampers—New Year gifts from his father, who was a well-to-do farmer, to certain of his acquaintances. At any other time, deep though the snow lay on the ground, such a commission would have given him great pleasure, especially as one of them was for Mrs. Gibbs, the lodge-keeper at the Park, and contained a plump chicken and some rosy apples for her little invalid son. But the thought of Puff's uncertain fate darkened all his sky. Even pleasant Mrs. Gibbs' smile and merry greeting, and assurances of how delighted Johnnie would be with Mr. Morgan's kind present, failed to warm his heart.

He cantered home through the fast-falling

flakes, and for the first time since Puff became his own, no joyous bark or little pattering feet welcomed his return.

"Puff! Puff!" he cried, "where are you?"

But no Puff appeared. Upstairs and down, throughout every room he repeated the same familiar name. Barn and stable and wood-sheds he scoured. All in vain. Puff had suddenly and mysteriously disappeared.

Father and mother, grandma and servants, all declared their complete innocence and ignorance concerning the matter, yet where could the puppy be? Charlie, who credited Puff with unlimited intelligence, even thought it possible that hearing his banishment discussed he might, in despair, have determined to relieve them of his presence by running away!

The whole of that day passed, and the next, and next, but nothing had been heard or seen of the little dog. Mr. Morgan seemed rather glad that the difficulty of its disposal had been thus easily solved, but Charlie grieved for his pet by night and day. The snow-storm with which the new year had been ushered in, continued for nearly four-and-twenty hours, and the boy felt sadly certain that buried in one of the deeper drifts the body of poor, lost Puff must lie.

On the fourth morning the sun shone once more, and Charlie, setting out to make in-

quiries, though almost hopelessly, among the neighbours, met Mrs. Gibbs just entering at the gate.

She smiled as cheerily as usual. "I was just coming to thank your father for the nice present he sent," she began. "But what an idea to be sure! I always said Mr. Morgan was the most humorous gentleman I ever knew. I thought I should ha' killed myself with laughing."

"Johnnie liked it, I s'pose?" said Charlie, though he could not exactly see where the laugh came in.

"Oh, dear, yes, he couldn't have had anything that pleased him better. Such a little beauty and so full of antics."

"What?" demanded Charlie, his eyes opening wide, for he did not know whether his ears had deceived him, or if "antics" were a special kind of stuffing for fowls!

"It's so lively you know," explained Mrs. Gibbs, wondering in her turn at the boy's puzzled face. "It amuses Johnnie fine. It's all over the place, and seems as fond of Johnnie as can be already."

"Mrs. Gibbs, what *do* you mean?" asked Charlie. "Father sent Johnnie some apples and a chicken."

Then it all came out. No chicken, but a curly white puppy lay snuggled in among

the hay when the hamper was undone, and Mrs. Gibbs quite took that to be Mr. Morgan's New Year gift to her little boy ; though such an idea had never entered the farmer's mind.

The solution of the puzzle was this : Mrs. Morgan had half-filled the hamper with pippins, and on them laid a quantity of hay. Then she told the maid to kill and prepare a certain chicken, and put it in on the top. But Mary either did not understand or forgot to do what she was told ; the chicken never went in. Meanwhile, however, Master Puff, finding an inviting bed atop of the apples, curled himself up there and went to sleep. By-and-by, Grandma Morgan came to fasten the basket up. She was very dim-sighted, but judging by the weight that the bird was duly packed, shut down the lid, and tied the string. Thus it came about that Puff found a welcome in an unthought-of home, and Johnnie Gibbs received a present that did him more good than a dozen fowls.

Puff still lives at the lodge, and Charlie often sees him. The delight that lame Johnnie finds in the fond and cunning little creature is worth far more than the transient sorrow its adventure cost ; and many a joke he and Charlie have had about the "fine, four-legged chicken" that was sent as a New Year's Gift.

"BOBO":

A Story of a Monkey.

BY MARY GORGES.



ONCE upon a time—and that time within the memory of the writer—Barnum's celebrated show attracted every one in or near London. And one little boy, in a certain family not far from where it was exhibiting, became possessed with "menagerie fever," so everyone said. It was "May we go to-day?" when Eddy Scott got up in the morning; and a red-letter day it was to the child when he was allowed to go.

He was the eldest, he was the household darling, and he was generally good, so he got his wish pretty often. His younger brother, Dick, and his little sister, finding Eddy so bent on this one amusement, followed his lead, and if the choice were left to them, always asked to go to Barnum's.

Eddy's attraction was a little Brazilian ape, which, being very tame and gentle, was permitted to range freely among the tents. All Eddy's time when he went to Barnum's was spent with "Bobo"; every penny he had went to buy cakes and sweeties for the little creature who took them so gently and gratefully. Who can tell what visions of vanished woods and playmates came back to Bobo with the kindness of his human playfellow, for whom his eyes and his little gestures expressed so much love?

But Barnum's visit drew to a close. Eddy got his mother to promise he might go every day of that last week. And every day he went.

One evening he showed her half-a-crown. It was his own, and he wanted to know would it buy Bobo.

"Buy Bobo! No, dear; nor a good many more. Why, what do you want with Bobo, Eddy?"

"I love him, and he loves me, and he'll fret terribly when he doesn't see me any more."

"Nonsense, darling—monkeys don't fret; and besides, I should not like him about the house. Monkeys are mischievous, and Connie is such a mite, he would frighten her—bite her, perhaps."

"How many half-crowns would it take to

buy Bobo?" asked Eddy, without heeding this.

"A great many more than your father or I could give," answered Mrs. Scott; "and then Mr. Barnum doesn't sell his monkeys."

"When I'm a big man," said Eddy, his blue eyes suspiciously moist, "I'll earn lots and lots of money—silver half-crowns, and gold half-crowns; and—and—I'll have a house of my own, and I'll make Mr. Barnum let me buy him."

Saying which he trotted off; he was "rather fended," as Connie would say.

To her, his little sister, he told his intentions that night; she agreed to save too, so they would have "lots and lots" of money before Christmas day, and a house of their own, and Bobo.

Next morning came—the last day for Barnum—and, alas! Connie awoke with a sore throat. She whispered the fact to Eddy when Nurse was out of the room.

"I'se a defful sore troat, Ed, and I'se tyin' not to tell."

"A sore throat, Connie?"

Eddy was dismayed. Connie's sore throats generally ended in weeks of dangerous illness, from which Connie emerged like a little shadow. "You'd better tell, Connie," he said, very soberly.

"No ; me want 'oo see Bobo aden."

Nurse came back with their breakfasts of hot bread-and-milk, and Connie tried hard to get hers down without wincing. But it hurt the poor sore throat, and Nurse's sharp eyes detected the effort.

"You have a sore throat, Miss Connie." She was put back to bed, and mother was sent for.

Then she astonished them by such a burst of crying as terrified Mrs. Scott.

"She must be very bad, Nurse ; send for the doctor."

But Connie managed to sob out her sorrow—

"Poor Eddy tan't go to Barnum, and he wanted so."

"Oh, my dear, is that all ?" cried her mother. "He shall go if you stop crying."

Connie stopped at once, and Eddy was got ready, to be sent with Dick, under the charge of the nursemaid, Kitty.

Nurse did not like this arrangement, and Mrs. Scott was rather sorry for her hasty consent when she remembered how thoughtless a girl Kitty was. But she could not disappoint the children now ; so, with many charges to Kitty, they set off.

No Bobo was visible when they entered and went down the side where the wild

beast cages stood, stopping opposite the great Bengal tiger.

And now small, trained elephants came out on the other side, and began performances. Dick pulled Kitty by the hand; there was a rush of the crowd, and the space opposite the lions and tigers was left empty, save for one small figure that did not budge. On the rope railing fronting the tiger's cage, Eddy began to perform gymnastics. He balanced himself, then stood steady, hoping that Dick, whom he could just see in front of the crowd opposite the elephants, would look round and admire him. He had forgotten Bobo for the moment.

He never guessed that the terrible tiger behind him was just unsheathing his claws through the bars, preparatory to reaching out his cruel paw for the tempting tit-bit within his reach. One moment and those claws would seize poor little Eddy and draw him in beyond the possibility of rescue.

A woman's terrified scream rings out, causing every head to turn, every glance to be directed back across the arena, towards the recently-deserted cages. The scream came from Kitty, who, missing Eddy at last, had looked round and seen his awful peril. Paralysed with terror, Dick clinging frightened to her hand, she was unable to stir. An inde-



"HE INSTANTLY DROPPED UPON THE OUTSTRETCHED PAW."

—p. 54.

scribable thrill of horror ran through every one, and none of the keepers being present at the moment, there was no one with sufficient presence of mind and courage to institute an immediate attempt to rescue the unfortunate child.

But a rescuer was at hand.

It was a moment of awful suspense. And then, just as the tiger's outstretched paw was about to fall on the unconscious child, there was suddenly heard a great chatter, and Bobo was observed speeding along the tops of the cages. Arriving over that of the tiger, he instantly dropped upon the outstretched paw with such a hideous screech as not only to cause it to be quickly withdrawn, but to send Eddy with a cry of alarm off the rope and out of danger.

He was saved !

A shout of joy and relief burst from the spectators. Kitty flew to Eddy, unable to do anything but cry hysterically and hug him. But Eddy shook her off. He did not know what had happened, but he saw Bobo on the ground apparently dead. The tiger, in its disappointment and fury, had mauled him terribly, and flung him away. Alas, for heroic little Bobo !

The head-man was brought on the scene ; he pronounced Bobo dying, and, indeed, the life seemed to have left him.

Eddy's tears fell like rain. Mr. Barnum was touched; he was very pitiful to the sobbing child, and very gentle to the poor little ape. A slight gasp now and then showed Bobo was not dead yet.

"I tell you what," the head-man said to Eddy, "if there's a man can recover poor Bobo it's myself; and I'll take as much care of him as if he was my own child, for your sake and his own too. He saved your life."

So Eddy had to go.

"Do you think he'll live, sir?" he asked.

"He has got ugly hurts, and if he dies of them it will be soon; but I'll do my best, and if I get him round I'll give him to you, if your parents will let you have him, and that's no small gift, for the story of what he did would fill the tents any day."

When Mrs. Scott heard the story of Eddy's peril she almost fainted. Her little boy so near a cruel death, and saved by a monkey! She felt as if she never could do enough for Bobo.

So it came to pass that Eddy got the wish of his heart. For Bobo did recover, and Mr. Barnum carried him in his own arms to Eddy. And no monkey ever was so cared for and petted.

He was a grave, gentle little thing—never strong after those fearful wounds. His devo-

tion to Eddy was wonderful ; he seemed to consider the boy his peculiar charge, and he was always restless without his young friend.

It was almost pathetic to see the love that could only express itself by looks and acts. It seemed as if Bobo ought to be able to speak, and tell some of the feelings expressed in his wistful eyes.

He lived for some years ; then he grew weak, and still weaker, could less and less bear to lose sight of Eddy, and died at last with his little head on the boy's shoulder.

There was mourning through the house and for Eddy a sorrow for his well-loved pet that he never forgot.

STANLEY'S REVENGE.

BY FRANCES E. HUNT.



"I 'LL have it yet, I will indeed ! I'll have my revenge on Bob Travers !"

And Stanley's brown eyes blazed with anger, as he burst into his mother's quiet sitting-room.

"Oh, Stanley!" said a gentle voice from the couch near the fire. "Oh, Stanley!" That was all, but the tone in which it was said brought the boy to his mother's side with a quick, impetuous step, and his passion found relief in a storm of tears, as he laid his curly head down on her shoulder.

Mrs. Arnold did not speak for a moment or two. She only stroked the bonnie curls with a loving touch, which seemed to make the tears come faster than ever ; but presently

the sobs grew quieter, and then she said, "Now, tell me all about it, dear."

"Oh, mamma," Stanley said, "you know how fond I was of dear old Terry, and — oh, I can't tell you!"

"Terry!" said Mrs. Arnold, in surprise; "why, what has happened to the good old dog?"

"He's dead, mamma!" cried the little boy, "and Bob Travers killed him."

Mrs. Arnold was greatly shocked. "This is a very serious thing, my boy," she said; "how did it occur?"

Then the painful story was told. Being a holiday, the fine spring day had been spent by Stanley and several schoolmates in a glorious ramble along the beautiful line of cliffs which formed the most striking feature of the pretty sea-side neighbourhood.

"And when we got as far as Red-rock Point," said poor Stanley, "Bob told us he had a dog in London which could leap into the sea after a stick from a height greater than that of the Black Boulders; you know which I mean, mamma. And he wanted me to make Terry jump from that place into the water. I said it was too high, and Terry came and sniffed at the edge, and looked up at us and barked, as if to say, 'I would do it if it were possible!'

"And then he got behind me, and would not go near the cliff-side again. I heard Bob Travers laughing, and saw him whisper to John Davies, and then, before I knew what they were about, Bob picked up Terry, and threw him over.

"And he went down, and oh, he did whine so pitifully, mamma ; and he banged against a rock at the bottom, and then rolled into the sea. He must have been stunned, poor old fellow, for though we got down to the beach as fast as we could, we didn't see any more of him, he must have sunk at once."

"And what did you do, dear?" asked Mrs. Arnold.

"Why, I just walked up to Bob Travers and told him he was a coward, and that I would have my revenge!" said Stanley, clenching his fist.

"Gently, my darling," said his mother, spreading the brown fingers out again as she spoke. "Perhaps poor Terry was able to scramble out before you reached the shore, and is somewhere amongst the rocks," she added hopefully.

Stanley shook his head. "We looked, mamma," he said, "but he wasn't there."

And then the mother spoke long and lovingly to her boy, of One who says, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." And

when that quiet talk was over, Stanley whispered, "It's very hard to lose my dog, but I will try to forgive Bob, mamma."

"Stanley," said his mother, a few mornings afterwards, "I want you to walk across to Fairbay, and ask Johnstone to bring some fish to-morrow."

"Very well, mamma," was the listless reply. In truth the boy was looking far from well. The loss of his old companion had "upset him above a bit," as Nurse Fellows expressed it; and it was to try to rouse him a little that Mrs. Arnold had arranged the message to Fairbay.

Stanley's way led for some distance across the fields, just then in the tender green of joyous spring-time. The light wind lifted the brown curls from his forehead, and some saucy little sparrow chirped and twittered almost under his feet.

But he strolled on, thinking sadly of his lost dog. The dog had been his one play-mate, for Stanley's only sister had died when he himself was a baby.

Presently the road turned sharply off to the cliffs, and, after winding along the edge for a mile or more, suddenly swept down a steep ravine to the beach.

This was Stanley's destination, for the tiny village of Fairbay nestled in a kind of natural basin at the foot of the cliffs.



"ME AND MY MATE PICKED HIM UP A SWIMMING OUT
WITH THE EBB-TIDE."—p. 63.

And very pretty the place looked, from a distance! But when one got down to the one funny little street, the smell of the fish-curing, by which the villagers earned a livelihood, was more powerful than pleasing.

Perched upon a ledge of rock, from which it overlooked its humbler neighbours, was the tiny white-washed cottage for which Stanley was bound.

The message delivered, he turned, and leaning against the green-painted door, looked gloomily over the sea.

Old Johnstone lived alone, and as he moved stiffly about his queer little room, "putting things ship-shape," as he said, he gave a good many keen, inquiring glances at Stanley's heavy eyes.

"What's come to you, laddie, and where are your bonnie roses gone?" he asked, at length.

And the story was told again, only this time it was accompanied by many a "dear heart!" and "poor beastie!" on Johnstone's part.

Suddenly the old man brought his brown hand down on the table with a thump, as he exclaimed, "Stop a bit, laddie! you come down street with me!" And before the astonished boy could speak, Johnstone had seized his cap, and was swinging down to

the village with Stanley following breathlessly.

He found Johnstone standing among a group of fishermen on the tiny quay to which their boats were moored. "Here!" cried the old man, as Stanley came up, "here's the young gentleman himself. Tell them how you lost your dog, laddie," he said, turning to bewildered Stanley.

"It was on Saturday, just by the Red-rock Point," he said, with his heart beating fast.

A heavy-looking young man turned slowly round. "Was it a brown dog, with a red leather collar?" he asked.

"Oh, yes! That's Terry!" was the joyful reply.

"Then I reckon he's all right," said a man who had not spoken before. "He's yonder, aboard the smack," he added, jerking his thumb in the direction of the sea. "Me and my mate picked him up a swimming out with the ebb-tide. And pretty nigh dead he was, for he'd an ugly cut over the eye; but he's all right now."

Half-an-hour later old Terry and his master were racing joyously home; nor were the friends who had rescued the poor dog forgotten or unrewarded.

One summer evening that same year, a party of schoolboys were bathing merrily

together at Red-rock Point. Suddenly one of the bathers cried out in terror.

"It's Travers," shouted the boys, in consternation; "he's out of his depth!"

Yes, it was Travers; and his screams grew fainter as he drifted farther from the beach.

But what is that shout? "Good dog! good Terry! Fetch him out, old fellow!"

And the noble animal plunged into the sea, and swam bravely out to save the boy who had been so cruel to him at this very place. It was a hard pull, but Terry struggled bravely, and when he had dragged the half-unconscious Travers into shallower water the boys crowded round and relieved him of his burden.

"And, oh, mamma," said Stanley that evening, as he sat on the hearth-rug before the fire which had been lighted to help Terry dry his coat, "Terry and I have had our revenge to-day!"

And Mrs. Arnold smiled.

THE END.

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